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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7799
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4684
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1943
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0953
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1555
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1470
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2285
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2422
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0554
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000191

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: TRAFFICKING -- PRESSING A KEY MINISTRY TO RENEW
PROTECTION EFFORT

REF: A. 07 JAKARTA 2641

[1](#)B. 07 JAKARTA 590

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Mission continues to work with the GOI in addressing the abuse of Indonesian migrant labor. During a recent protection workshop, a senior Ministry of Manpower official agreed with USG concerns on the need to provide greater protection for migrants and pledged renewed efforts. Separately, police--in a meeting with Labatt and RSO--have reported increased cooperation with the Manpower Ministry, including a recent joint raid. END SUMMARY.

CHILD PROTECTION WORKSHOP

[1](#)2. (U) On January 24, Labatt delivered opening remarks at an International Labour Organization (ILO) workshop. The workshop's purpose was to evaluate the success of the U.S. Department of Labor/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) project for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (see para 8-9 for a discussion of this vital program). In his remarks, Labatt advocated the following:

- the need for increased law enforcement scrutiny of manpower agencies;
- the need for a hike in the GOI budget focused on fighting trafficking and helping victims;
- more collaboration with destination countries; and,
- the need to renegotiate bilateral MOUs which cede basic migrant workers' rights--including the holding of passports by employers.

Labatt also addressed exorbitant fees charged migrant workers by manpower agents, which can put workers into debt bondage. (Note: Roughly four million Indonesians work overseas, mostly in Malaysia and the Middle East.)

[1](#)3. (U) During his remarks, I Gusti Made Arka--the Manpower Ministry's Secretary General for Supervision and Monitoring--took note of the U.S. Embassy's close attention to labor protection issues and stated that he hopes to

continue to work closely with Mission in order to improve the Ministry's capacity to protect workers. He noted that if the ministry is not successful in protecting workers, that it could lose the international assistance it needs to help do its job, and that he does not want that to happen. (Note: Arka has been the key GOI official working on migrant worker protection for several years. He led the GOI team renegotiating a controversial MOU with Malaysia on migrant workers.)

PLEDGING RENEWED EFFORTS

14. (C) During a January 29 meeting with Labatt, Arka again listened to USG concerns and responded positively, pledging:

--To press for funding to allow the government to handle all recruitment, training and placement of migrant workers, thus cutting out the job brokers who use debt bondage as a tool for trafficking.

--To press the countries where migrants work to make employers pay costs and fees so that workers do not go into debt.

--To redouble efforts to close down worker placement agencies which keep migrant workers locked up pending their movement overseas, thus making them vulnerable to trafficking.

15. (C) Arka remained undecided on how to proceed with the issue of the MOU with Malaysia allowing employers to hold workers' passports (see reftels). He claimed that when workers were allowed to hold their own passports, that abuse was worse as syndicates stole passports from domestic workers in order to traffic them. Labatt explained how the international community and Indonesian NGOs are of one mind

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that the practice of employers holding passports violates workers' fundamental rights and makes them vulnerable to trafficking. Arka agreed to discuss this issue further with us, admitting that he is ambivalent on the issue.

WORKING WITH THE POLICE

16. (C) Mission continues to work to make sure that key ministries and law enforcement are working together to curb trafficking. Separately, during a January 29 meeting with Agung Sabar Santoso, the head of the anti-trafficking unit at the Indonesian National Police (INP), Agung told Labatt and RSO that police cooperation with the Manpower Ministry in enforcing the new anti-trafficking law as it involves private manpower brokers was improving. The Manpower Ministry has joined in police raids against illicit manpower broker activities, for example. He cited a recent operation against a licensed job broker which rescued seven workers under age 18, out of 146 workers at the holding center. Personnel at the firm are being held on charges of recruiting underage workers and document fraud, and are being interrogated to see whether they implicate the owners of the operation.

MORE PROGRESS NEEDED

17. (C) As we have reported, the Manpower Ministry is widely regarded by workers' protection NGOs as lagging behind other law enforcement bodies in protecting workers from trafficking. Of late, however, ILO and other international organizations are finding the Ministry increasingly cooperative. Arka's willingness to work closely with the U.S. Embassy and consider our views is a good start. We pledged to include manpower officials in various training projects funded by the USG. The organizations we fund have already agreed to include Ministry officials in their labor and anti-trafficking training projects.

18. (U) ADDENDUM ON KEY PROJECT: Based on Labatt's discussions with NGOs during the January 24 ILO workshop, the USG-funded ILO-IPEC project on the Worst Forms of Child Labor has succeeded in its first few years in effectively

addressing the most pressing child labor problems in Indonesia. For example, independent ILO evaluator Clarence Shubert told Labatt that his interviews with grassroots NGOs working at one notorious redlight district confirmed that the ILO project had succeeded in reducing the population of underage prostitutes from 68 to eight.

19. (U) The workshop also held a focus session with child workers, who commented that the solution to keeping children in school is to provide free, compulsory and quality education through grade nine, and that providing poor out-of-school children with substandard education through the open school concept is not a solution. Shubert told Labatt that the ILO-IPEC project pioneered new ground in addressing child labor, setting the stage to consolidate efforts during the next phase of the long-term 11 million dollar project.
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